

Bobcat Harvest 2004

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Abstract

During the 2004 Wisconsin bobcat season, hunters/trappers registered 364 bobcats, including 315 taken with DNR issued permits, 28 taken off reservation by native hunters/trappers, and 21 incidental kill registrations. The non-treaty harvest included 83 bobcats that were trapped, 195 shot over dogs, 26 taken incidental to other types of hunting/trapping, and 11 taken with method of harvest unrecorded. The counties of highest harvest were Price (54), Oneida (44), Ashland (33), Marinette (27) and Sawyer (27). The sex ratio from registration data was 0.87 males to 1 female, while the sex ratio from carcass collection was 1.34 males per female.

Background

Pils and Bluett (1984) discussed the background of Wisconsin's bobcat harvest management system and Dhuey, et al. (2004) described the results of the 2003 bobcat trapping season. Wisconsin's bobcat season runs from mid-October to the end of December in that portion of the state north of Highway 64. All hunters and trappers must obtain a special harvest permit before pursuing bobcats, and the annual bag limit is one bobcat per permit. The application fee for bobcat harvest permits is \$3.00, and successful applicants are selected by random drawing.

Methods

All bobcats must be registered by DNR law enforcement personnel and their carcasses turned over to the DNR for research purposes. The area of kill (county and deer management unit), date of kill, sex of the animal, method of harvest, and the name and address of the hunter or trapper were recorded for each bobcat registered. These data were entered into the DNR UNIX computer by district personnel and summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS). All bobcat carcasses collected were examined to document the sex and age structure of the harvest, and to determine reproductive and mortality rates in the population.

Results

A total of 7,517 hunters and trappers applied for 1,370 bobcat harvest permits available in 2004 (Table 1). The season ran from 16 October through 31 December, with 364 bobcats being registered. This included non-tribal (315), tribal (28), and incidental bobcat kills (21). This was the second highest recorded harvest over the previous 24-year period, second only to 2003 with 371 bobcats and above the 1980-2003 average of 186 bobcats.

Sixty-two percent of the bobcats killed in 2004 were shot over dogs and 26% were trapped (Table 2). In 2003, 64% of the bobcats were taken over dogs and 27% were trapped. Bobcats taken incidental to other hunting/trapping activities comprised 8% of the harvest. Method of harvest was unrecorded for 11 bobcats harvested.

In 2004, Chippewa hunters/trappers took 28 bobcats on ceded lands (data provided by Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission; Jonathan Gilbert, April 2004 memo). One bobcat was registered with a kill location on a Wisconsin reservation. This kill is included in the statewide totals.

Bobcats killed incidentally are registered with the WDNR. In 2004, 21 bobcats were registered as incidental kills. Fourteen of the 21 incidental kills were road kills.

The average pelt price for bobcats in 2004 (\$73.11; ranged from \$23 to \$88) was higher than in 2003 (\$67.23), this was the highest price paid for bobcats since 1987 and much above the prices paid over the past 10-15 years.

Price county led all other counties with a harvest of 54, followed by Oneida(44), and Ashland(33)(Fig. 1). Deer Management Units 28 and 38 had the highest harvest at 23, followed by units 13 (21), and 25 (19)(Fig. 2).

Weather conditions, particularly the number of days with new snowfall, can have a major effect on the success rate of bobcat hunters/trappers. Weather conditions during the 2004 bobcat season were again very good to excellent. Hunter's/trapper's were greeted with many days of fresh light snow cover during December. This made for good tracking conditions and bobcat were easy to locate and pursue during the late season. Non-tribal permit success was 23% in 2004 (Table 3); this was the similar to 2003, which was the highest recorded in the past 24 years.

Carcasses were obtained from 300 of the 364 bobcats killed in 2004. The sex ratio of carcasses examined was 1.34 males per 1 female. The WDNR Furbearer Advisory Committee has recommended a harvest goal of 400 bobcats for the 2005 season.

Literature Cited

Dhuey B. J. Olson and A. Roth. 2004. Bobcat Harvest, 2003. IN: The Wisconsin Wildlife Surveys Report, August 2004. Document on file at the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, Bureau of Research, Monona, WI 53716

Pils, C. M. and R. Bluett. 1984. The 1984 Wisconsin bobcat harvest summary. Wis. Dep. of Nat. Resour. 8pp.

Table 1. *Total number of permits issued, total bobcats registered, and average pelt price from 1980 to 2004.*

Year	# of Permits Issued	Total Registered Harvest	Average Pelt Price (\$)
1980	1,840	90	84.00
1981	2,675	208	78.93
1982	2,972	139	70.67
1983	3,214	206	61.91
1984	3,089	260	71.93
1985	4,191	189	61.78
1986	4,064	183	86.55
1987	5,114	247	85.37
1988	5,285	165	55.34
1989	5,051	136	48.08
1990	4,359	98	56.79
1991	2,358	71	35.24
1992	2,300	217	37.52
1993	2,000	160	45.02
1994	2,000	169	36.17
1995	2,000	111	45.47
1996	2,000	166	44.75
1997	2,000	216	43.70
1998	1,860	194	41.25
1999	1,540	187	46.24
2000	1,490	280	41.88
2001	781	152	41.81
2002	1,330	253	46.31
2003	1,380	371	67.23
2004	1,370	364	73.11

Table 2. *The 2004 Wisconsin bobcat harvest by method of harvest. These data do not include incidental or tribal harvest.*

Harvest Method	Number Harvested	Percent Harvested
Trapped	83	26.3%
Shot over Dogs	195	61.9%
Incidental to Other Hunting	26	8.3%
Unrecorded	11	3.5%

Table 3. *The 2004 Wisconsin bobcat harvest goal and applicant results.*

Non-tribal Harvest Goal*	Applicants	Permits Issued	Tags/ Applicant	Non-tribal, Non-Incidental Harvest	Permit Success Rate
325	7,517	1,370	0.18	315	23.0%

- The total Wisconsin harvest goal was 375 bobcats. This included an accepted tribal declaration of 50, and a non-tribal harvest goal of 325.



**7 Bobcat were registered
with unit of kill unrecorded**



Figure 2. Distribution of the 2004 Wisconsin bobcat harvest by deer management unit. The shaded unit represents the unit of highest harvest.